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Intergenerational Transfer of Conflict-Management Behaviors

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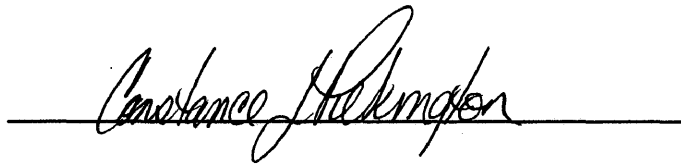
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Susan B. Cunningham

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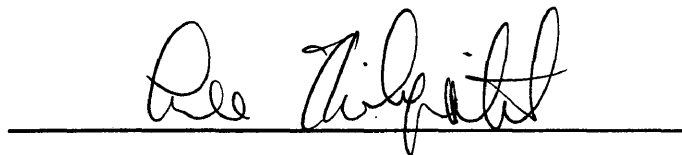
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ABSTRACT

Social learning theory was used as a theoretical framework for studying the intergenerational transfer of conflict-management (CM) behaviors. Forty-five male and 61 female undergraduates completed questionnaires assessing their own use and their parents use of CM behaviors and topics of conflict. Parents and romantic partners evaluated the subjects' CM behavior. Parents also evaluated their own conflict topics and behaviors with their spouse. Consistency in the use of CM behaviors across the parent-child and romantic relationship was observed. Evidence for the process of intergenerational transfer of CM behaviors was found but appeared stronger for males than females. Fathers appeared to have a greater influence on the process of intergenerational transfer. Possible explanations for the sex differences are discussed.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

The present research investigates the transfer of conflict-management (CM) behaviors and topics of conflict in romantic relationships from one generation to the next. It is hypothesized that exposure to the conflict behaviors of one's parents facilitates the acquisition of preferred conflict-managing styles. This acquisition is suggested to occur through social learning processes such as modeling.

According to Rahim and Bonoma (1979), conflict occurs because one person perceives that he or she holds preferences that are incompatible with another person's, wants a "mutually desirable resource" that is in short supply, and/or possesses values or attitudes that are perceived to be exclusive of the values of the other person. Differences in preferences, needs, and values alone do not guarantee open conflict. The differences must be severe enough to breach the conflict threshold. Threshold levels may differ among individuals, resulting in some individuals becoming involved in conflict sooner than others (Rahim, 1986).

Conflict may be classified according to the level at which it occurs (e.g., intrapersonal, intragroup, intergroup). The emphasis of the current discussion is on interpersonal conflict because it more accurately defines the nature of conflict that occurs within the family system.

Interpersonal conflict has the potential for creating strong emotional states which may influence an individual's perception of the other person

(Pruitt and Rubin, 1986). For example, if an individual enters into a conflict by being brash and unresponsive to the needs of the other person, the other person may form a negative impression of the individual. This negative impression may lead to a biased interpretation of future interactions with the individual. In contrast, the stability of the relationship may be strengthened when both individuals are willing to calmly discuss the issues and are agreeable to a compromise. The ability of conflict to have such an impact on relationships makes it a necessary area of investigation.

Taxonomy of Conflict-Management Behaviors

Investigations of CM behavior can be aided by placing behaviors exhibited during a conflict into some type of taxonomy. Putnam and Wilson (1982) proposed a three-dimensional structure of organizational conflict management in which behaviors could be classified as non-confrontation, solution-oriented, or control behaviors. Non-confrontation behaviors involve indirect strategies such as avoiding or withdrawing and may be exhibited behaviorally by silence or concealing ill feelings. Behaviors which involve a solution-orientated approach include direct communication, integration of needs, and a willingness to compromise. Finally, control behaviors involve arguing for one's position and attempting to dominate the interaction.

Rahim (1983) differentiated styles of conflict management within a two-dimensional model and labeled the behaviors that resulted from crossing

the two dimensions as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. The first dimension deals with the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy his/her own needs, whereas the second dimension deals with the degree to which the individual attempts to satisfy the needs of the other person. An integrating style, which involves problem solving in an attempt to find a solution acceptable to both parties, is exhibited when concern for both self and other is high. A moderate concern for both self and other is exhibited through a compromising style. In this case, each person gives something up to reach a settlement. An obliging style suggests a low concern for self but a high concern for the other and involves playing down differences, emphasizing commonalities, and giving in. The use of obliging is more likely to occur when the issue is perceived to be more important to the other party. A high concern for self but low concern for the other is suggested in the use of a dominating style. It involves forcing one's position to win a conflict while ignoring the needs and expectations of the other party. Finally, an avoiding style indicates a low concern for self as well as for the other. An individual using an avoiding style may avoid the topic when with the person or avoid interactions with the person completely. Avoiding also may involve withdrawal from the situation and may be useful when the conflict seems trivial.

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory - II (ROCI-II) is a 28-

item questionnaire based upon Rahim's (1983) two-dimensional model; it was

designed to measure an individual's use of integrating, compromising,

avoiding, obliging, and dominating during organizational conflict. Test-retest

reliability coefficients of the ROCI-II were between .60 and .83. Internal

consistency estimates ranged from .72 to .77. The questionnaire was deemed

to be a reliable instrument to be used in basic research, teaching, and

diagnosis of styles of handling interpersonal conflict among members of an

organization (Rahim, 1983).

Using the model proposed by Rahim (1983), Hammock, Richardson,

and Pilkington (1990) investigated its applicability to social relationships.

Subjects completed the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983) with regard to either a friend,

sibling, parent, or generalized other as the target. A factor analysis of the

subjects' responses to the scale items for all targets revealed that items aimed

at measuring the two different strategies of integrating and compromising

loaded on a single factor that was subsequently labeled as problem solving.

Because the expected outcome of using both styles is similar (i.e., a solution

that is agreeable to both parties), the results of the factor analysis are not

surprising.

In sum, it appears that avoiding, obliging, problem-solving, and

dominating are four general CM strategies an individual can use during

conflicts. The selection of a strategy to be used by an individual can be a

complex process. For instance, Pruitt and Rubin (1986) contend that the

choice of which strategy to use is a matter of the perceived feasibility of the

strategy achieving the desired outcome and the cost of using the strategy. For

example, the likelihood that problem-solving will be used is dependent upon

faith in one's problem-solving ability, the past success of using

problem-solving during a similar controversy, and the perceived readiness of

the other party to problem-solve (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

Situational Consistency

CM behavior studies have investigated peoples' use of CM behaviors

across various situations. Sternberg and Soriano (1984) examined an

individual's consistency of CM behavior across interpersonal,

interorganizational, and international situations. In their study, subjects were

presented with three conflicts in each domain and rated each of seven

different ways of handling the conflict in terms of its appropriateness. For

each conflict story, the following categories of strategies were presented: (a)

"physical action" involved physical force or coercion; (b) "economic action"

involved withholding money from the other party; (c) "wait and see" involved

waiting to see what happened; (d) "accept the situation" involved making the

best of the circumstances; (e) "step-down" involved reducing the demands on

the other party; (f) "third-party intervention" involved including a mediator;

and (g) "undermine esteem" involved undermining the admiration that the

other party received from others outside the situation. The results revealed cross-situational correlations of .77 to .78, suggesting a consistency in people's preference for a particular strategy across situations. This finding seems to indicate that individuals do have conflict resolution styles which they prefer and that they use these styles consistently across situations.

Similar results supporting the notion of stylistic consistency across situations have been obtained by subsequent investigators. Sternberg and Dobson (1987) expanded Sternberg and Soriano's (1984) study to include real conflicts experienced by the subject. The subjects described a recent conflict with a same-sex peer, an opposite-sex peer, and a parent. They then rated which of the seven resolution methods used in the Sternberg and Soriano (1984) study were applicable to their resolutions. Subjects then indicated how they would have ideally handled the conflict and rated the ideal resolution methods using the seven resolution methods. Sternberg and Dobson (1987) found that individuals had strong preferences for certain styles, and these preferences were consistent across the three situations. Conflict-mitigating styles (i.e., wait and see and accept the situation) were preferred over conflict-intensifying styles (i.e., physical force and economic action). In addition, a mean correlation of .97 for real styles and a mean correlation of .96 for ideal styles was found for preferences for the various styles across the three situations.

In a more recent study, Grace and Harris (1990) used the same scenario stimuli, the same suggested modes of conflict resolution, but six times as many subjects as Sternberg and Soriano (1984). Contrary to the results obtained by Sternberg and Soriano (1984), Grace and Harris (1990) found that subjects did not rate certain resolution types as equally favorable across the three domains (i.e., personal, organization, international). In addition, subjects rated certain resolution styles as being more favorable in some situations than in others. For instance, accept the situation was rated as most favorable for organizational conflicts, whereas third-party intervention was rated as most favorable for personal conflicts.

Grace and Harris (1990) suggested there may be less consistency across situations than Sternberg and Soriano (1984) argued. Moreover, Sternberg and Soriano (1984) and Sternberg and Dobson (1987) reported statistical interactions involving the situation that suggested less consistency than the authors claimed. Thus, the investigation into the consistency of CM behavior across situations needs to be continued.

Individual Differences and C-M Choices

Other CM investigations have focused on the relation of various individual traits to a stable CM style. Pilkington, Richardson, and Utley (1988) investigated the relationship between sensation seeking and interpersonal CM behaviors. While all respondents were more likely to

report using an integrating style overall, the results provided some support

that high sensation seekers may prefer conflict-intensifying responses more

than low sensations seekers. More specifically, high sensation-seeking females

reported using dominating responses more frequently and obliging less

frequently than females who were low sensation seekers.

In contrast, Putnam and Wilson (1982) discovered that a person's

perception of the appropriateness of a strategy is not related to personality

traits. Their investigations of the use of CM strategies at the organizational

level revealed that contingencies such as perception of power, rewards, and

situational constraints, rather than one's personality, influence one's decision

to use a particular style.

Similarly, Stagner (1971) found that a person's perception of a conflict

may influence his/her resolution behavior. For instance, Stagner (1971)

argued that people often distort cues in a conflict which affect the style of

resolution they use. Thus, a person might perceive another individual as

threatening and use a CM strategy he or she believes appropriate to such a

situation. As Franklin (1967) states, perceptions determine reality, and an

individual's actions are based on how a situation is perceived.

Utley, Richardson, and Pilkington (1989) found that the identity of the

other person was important in the choice of interpersonal CM strategy. When

subjects reported their preferred style in reference to a perceived high status

target, more obliging and less dominating strategies were reported. A concern over self-presentation or concern over the other person's retaliative power in that type of situation may override an individual's preference for a particular strategy. In addition, the results revealed that subjects were more likely to choose strategies which showed a high degree of concern for self (i.e., integrating and dominating) in interactions with friends. In a relationship with a friend, the power distribution is more equal and a concern over self-presentation may not be as important.

The relationship between conflict responses and love attitudes was investigated by Richardson, Hammock, Lubben, and Mickler (1989). Using the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983) and the Love Attitudes Scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), the authors concluded that a relationship exists between responses to a conflict with a romantic partner and love attitudes. Specifically, it was found that individuals who scored high on passionate committed love and high on selfless love reported using obliging and integrating more frequently. Because these attitudes towards love are related to satisfaction with the relationship and liking for partner, use of CM strategies that imply a high concern for the other would be expected. Individuals who scored high on game-playing love reported more frequent use of dominating and avoiding. This love attitude is related to reduced liking for partners and lower levels of relationship satisfaction. It would be expected

that individuals with this love attitude would use CM strategies that show a low concern for the other. A negative relationship was found between game-playing love attitudes and an integrating strategy and between selfless love attitudes and a dominating strategy.

Taking the results from these studies as a whole, it is impossible to conclude that an individual handles conflict the same way in every situation with everybody. However, although an individual may not engage in identical CM behavior across all of his or her interpersonal interactions, he or she may be predisposed to handle conflict with certain individuals in a specific manner. For example, Utley et al. (1989) found that individuals were more likely to use integrating and dominating strategies with more equal-status targets. Furthermore, Sternberg and Dobson (1987) found that individuals preferred similar methods of handling conflict with friends and parents. An individual may tend to handle conflict with individuals he or she is closer to (e.g., boyfriend, sister, etc.) in a similar manner.

Formative Influences and C-M Behavior in the Home

Another approach to the study of CM behaviors is one that focuses on formative influences on CM behaviors. To ascertain the most influential forces in the development of CM behavior, Grace and Harris (1990) had college students rate 20 possible influences on that development (e.g., parents, friends, teachers, books, television, etc.). Subjects rated parents, friends,

family, and their culture, in descending order, as the four most influential forces. Because parents were perceived as the most influential, it is of interest to investigate the true impact of parents on the development of CM behaviors.

A child witnesses a great deal of interaction among individuals in his or her environment, and it is inevitable that some of these interactions will be conflictual in nature. Cummings, Iannotti, and Zahn-Waxler (1985) found children as young as two are affected by conflict between other people. Toddlers exposed to an angry interaction between two strangers exhibited greater levels of distress and aggression than those exposed to a positive interaction. Evidently, the conflict behaviors of others can affect individuals even at very young ages. Because an individual's first extended contact with others normally occurs within the family, it is of interest to determine the impact of familial conflict on the individual.

In an effort to investigate family conflict behaviors in more depth, Steinmetz (1977) questioned forty-nine families about various dimensions of marital conflicts. She found that, in general, discussion was used most often to resolve husband-wife conflicts, and hollering, threats, ignoring, and compromising were used with descending frequency. Although discussion was used most often, it was perceived to be successful only three-fourths of the time, while arguing and asserting authority were perceived as most successful.

The life-cycle stage of the family appeared to influence which resolution method was most often employed. As the children reached adolescence, the methods used by the parents to resolve marital conflict moved from discussion to hollering and arguing.

Investigations of the father-child, mother-child, and sibling-sibling relationships revealed several trends in the transfer of CM behavior (Steinmetz, 1977). Threats and discussion were used most often in parent-child conflicts, hollering and discussion in sibling conflicts, and discussion and hollering in marital conflicts. In addition, support for the inter-generational transfer of marital conflict-management styles was found; adult children appeared to utilize the same methods to resolve marital conflict as did their parents.

It should be noted that during her investigations, Steinmetz (1977) found an strong congruency in the children's and parents' reports of the parents' conflict responses. Apparently, children were able to correctly identify the styles of conflict management used by their parents. However, it also should be noted that Steinmetz's investigations were limited to the transfer of conflict-management styles within the parental and marital roles. Unfortunately, conflict is not limited to the context of the family. Conflict can also occur between friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

Jorgenson (1985) attempted to replicate Steinmetz's (1977) study of

family conflict. He found that methods of conflict resolution used by parents with each other were also used by the parents with their children. Moreover, the same methods were used by siblings with each other.

In a recent study, Camara and Resnick (1989) focused their research on 7-9 year old children from one and two parent households. The extensive data they collected from 82 families included family interviews, home visits, observations at school, observations during laboratory interaction tasks, teacher interviews, and teacher assessments. Interestingly, the amount of interparental conflict was not predictive of the child's social functioning. Rather, how the parents managed or regulated conflict had the greatest impact on the level of social functioning. For instance, if the father used verbal attack with his spouse, his son exhibited reduced cooperative play and his daughter engaged in more play behavior. However, when the father used compromise, both sons and daughters spent less unoccupied time during play. As would be expected, cooperation between the adults resulted in more communication and closer relationships with the children. Because Camara and Resnick (1989) focused on the impact of parental conflict management on young children, no conclusions can be drawn as to the effect of the parents' behavior during this developmental period at a later stage in the child's life.

Martin (1990) examined the effects of the family's CM behavior on

children by investigating how CM behavior between parents influences the relationships of late adolescents. Subjects completed a questionnaire assessing how likely they would respond with avoidance, verbal aggression, positive communication, and physical aggression to conflicts involving strong feelings with their parents and with their romantic partners. A questionnaire assessing the frequency of overt parental conflict in the previous five years and the subjects' general satisfaction with their dating or romantic relationships also was completed. Parents of a subsample of forty-five female subjects completed a questionnaire describing their conflicts with their daughters. Results revealed that son-to-mother verbal aggression was significantly correlated with son-to-girlfriend verbal aggression. A significant correlation also was found between daughter-to-mother physical aggression and daughter-to-boyfriend physical aggression.

CM behavior also was found to be related to romantic relationship difficulties. Specifically, daughter-to-mother avoidance and daughter-to-father verbal aggression were significantly correlated with relationship difficulties. For males, son-to-mother and son-to-father avoidance and verbal aggression were significantly correlated with relationship difficulties. Unfortunately, Martin (1990) limited his measurements of parental conflict to the frequency of conflict the subjects perceived their parents as having but did not include measures of specific CM behaviors. In addition, the parent sample was

limited to parents of female subjects.

Acquisition of Conflict-Management Behaviors

It is generally accepted that social learning processes such as modeling or imitation can lead to the acquisition of certain behaviors. As Mudd and Taubin (1967) state,

> one way of describing the process [of behavior acquisition] is to say that the child acquires images of different methods for dealing with conflict, and when an appropriate situation arises, he will reinstate this image and guide his behavior accordingly (p. 28).

The imitative learning ability exhibited by children was first explained as the result of instinctual processes (Morgan, 1986). Psychologists soon became skeptical of the explanatory worth of the instinct concept and turned to explanations based on some type of learning mechanism.

Bandura (1971) points out that classical conditioning theories (such as associative theory) fail to explain how novel behaviors appear in the first place. Reinforcement theories added the process of reinforcement as the selective factor in determining which responses displayed by a model would be imitated. However, learning was still thought of as the formation of associations between social stimuli and responses. Affective-feedback theories such as Mowrer's (1960) sensory-feedback theory of imitation continued to emphasize classical conditioning processes. Positive and negative emotions were thought

to become conditioned to behavior through direct or vicarious reinforcement of a modeled behavior. In contrast to previous theories, social learning theory placed a greater emphasis on cognitive processes in the acquisition of behaviors and emphasized the informative function of modeling. In other words, observations of a model become symbolic representations of the behavior rather than stimulus and responses associations (Bandura, 1971).

The modeling process in social learning is governed by four interrelated processes. The first is the <u>attentional process</u> which aids in the selection of behaviors to which an individual will attend. Motivation and psychological characteristics of the observer and aspects of the model, such as his or her attractiveness, can influence the attentional process. The <u>retention process</u> also can influence the extent to which modeling occurs. Because the behavior is acquired in representational form, rehearsal operations can often aid in retention of the modeled behavior. Another process governing modeling is <u>motoric reproduction</u>. The individual uses the symbolic representation of the behavior to guide behavior reproduction. In some cases, the success of observational learning may be governed by the accessibility of various sub-component motoric processes. For instance, a child might attempt to set a dinner table after observing the behavior by a model. However, the child may lack the knowledge of how to retrieve to plates from the cupboard. In this case, the child must first acquire the individual

behaviors before combining them into the final act. The fourth process governing modeling includes reinforcement and motivational processes. Positive incentives, as opposed to negative or unfavorable incentives, can facilitate the translation of observational learning into behavioral reproductions (Bandura, 1971).

Observational learning effects are demonstrated when an observer watches a model perform a novel behavior that the observer later reproduces in practically identical form. Observing the rewarding or punishing consequences of the model's behavior influences the acquisition of the behaviors. Inhibitory effects serve to weaken or reduce the likelihood of the observer performing the behavior at a later time. This effect can occur when an individual observes a model's performance of a behavior produce punishing consequences. Disinhibitory effects increase the likelihood of previously learned behaviors being performed. This effect can occur when an individual watches another individual engage in a behavior without adverse consequences (Bandura, 1971).

Bandura and Walters (1963) suggest that when a child learns a variety of responses to a social cue, these response patterns may vary in strength and form a habit hierarchy. A particular way of responding may dominate many hierarchies and be elicited in many social situations (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Behaviors higher up in the habit hierarchy are more likely to be

exhibited in a wide range of situations (Bandura, 1977).

Rotter (1982) points out that social learning theory is concerned with the study of the person in his or her meaningful environment. The "meaningful environment" may be the psychological rather than the physical environment, and an individual's perception of his or her environment may contribute to the process of social learning. For example, two individuals might react differently to a model's behavior depending on how each defines the psychological situation. What the individual brings into the situation (e.g., thoughts, ideas) may dictate what behaviors are learned.

Acock and Bengston (1980) pointed out that perceptions of a model's attitudes, rather than his/her real attitudes, can be more predictive of an observer learning those attitudes. Specifically, the researchers investigated the predictors of youths' orientations on political and religious issues. The question of interest was whether a parent's stated attitude or an attributed attitude (i.e., what the children thought their parents thought) was the better predictor of the post-adolescent's own attitudes. The researchers concluded that perceived attitudes of parents, rather than their actual attitudes, were stronger predictors of the adolescent's own attitudes on the issues.

Researchers have found support for the intergenerational transfer of certain attitudes and response styles. For instance, Sethi (1973) found parents and children were similar in their choice of responses to various frustrating

situations individuals may experience in their daily lives (e.g., trying to make an important phone call when others are making too much noise to hear). He supported a modeling explanation for this pattern. Feather (1978) found that parents and children reported similar conservative social and political beliefs that encompassed a wide spectrum of issues. Although children are not "carbon copies" of their parents, there is evidence that children are, in many ways, similar to their parents.

The cognitions and perceptions of an individual are important components of social learning theory. As applied to the present study, it is hypothesized that an individual will use CM behaviors in his or her romantic relationship that are similar to the CM behaviors the individual perceives his or her parents as using with each other. By modeling the perceived behaviors of parents, a hierarchy of behaviors appropriate to romantic relationships will be established that will predispose an individual to engage in certain observed CM behaviors in his/her own relationships.

Modeled behaviors that are developmentally- and age-appropriate to the skill to be learned are attended to best (Bandura and Walters, 1963). The hierarchy of CM behaviors appropriate to romantic relationships is assumed to develop during adolescence because it is during this time that romantic interests begin to develop. Individuals are probably more attentive to behaviors between others in romantic relationships during this time than at

earlier times in their development.

The present research investigated the relationship between a person's CM behaviors in a romantic relationship and the CM behavior of that person's parents. A positive correlation between parents' CM behaviors with each other and subjects' CM behaviors with their romantic partners was expected. Also of interest was the transfer of areas of conflict in romantic relationships from one generation to the next. Because the tendency to conflict on certain topics was also thought to be influenced by social learning factors, positive correlations were expected between parents' conflict areas with each other and subjects' conflict areas with their romantic partners.

Method

Pilot Study

As part of the major study, parents of the subjects completed both the ROCI-II and a topics of conflict questionnaire regarding the spousal and parent-child relationships. Concern arose over the possibility that parents would not respond if the questionnaires were too long. For this reason, it was decided to shorten the ROCI-II to help increase the possibility of a greater response rate from the parents. In addition, a factor analysis of the ROCI-II by Hammock et al. (1990) identified four factors; items aimed at measuring integrating and compromising loaded on a single factor labeled as problem solving. This result contradicts Rahim's (1983) analysis in which five factors

were identified. Due to the contradictory results of Hammock et al. (1990) and Rahim (1983), it was deemed necessary to investigate further the factor structure of the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983).

The ROCI-II was included in a packet of questionnaires distributed in introductory psychology classes. The ROCI-II consists of 28 statements describing various behaviors an individual can engage in during a conflict with a generalized other. Five hundred fifty-one subjects used a five-point scale to rate how often they engaged in each behavior during a typical conflict.

An unrestricted factor analysis was initially performed. An item was considered to load significantly on a factor if its loading was greater than .30. If an item loaded on two factors, the item was assigned to the factor on which it loaded heaviest. This initial analysis identified 12 factors and was deemed uninterpretable. In order to determine whether the Hammock et al. (1990) solution or the Rahim (1983) solution was more accurate, factor analyses specifying the varimax rotation of four and five factors were performed. Results supported Hammock et al.'s findings. Items identified by Rahim (1983) as measuring integrating and compromising loaded on a single factor. Three other factors were identified and were consistent with Rahim's (1983) categories of avoiding, obliging, and dominating. Factor loadings for this analysis appear in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here.

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In order to determine which items on each subscale should be kept for a shortened version of the questionnaire, a reliability analysis for items on each of the four factors was performed. The four items in each category with the highest corrected item-total correlations were retained for inclusion in the questionnaire. Results appear in Table 2. Items retained for the sixteen-item version of the ROCI-II are noted in Appendix A. Any further mention of the ROCI-II refers to the reduced sixteen-item version.

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Insert Table 2 about here.

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Main Study

Subjects. The subjects in the main study were 45 male and 61 female undergraduate students at the College of William and Mary. The students participated for partial fulfillment of their introductory psychology course requirements. Subjects were selected on the basis of being in a dating or romantic relationship. Parents of the subjects were contacted through the mail and asked to participate in the study. Romantic partners of subjects were asked to participate by their romantic partners. Response rates for parents and romantic partners to the questionnaires were 55% ($\underline{n}$ = 64

mothers; n = 58 fathers) and 64% ($\underline{n}$ = 36 female partners; 32 male partners), respectively.[1]

Materials. The shortened version of the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim, 1983) was used to assess the conflict-management strategies of the subject and the parents. An Areas of Interpersonal Conflict Inventory (AICI) was developed to assess areas of interpersonal conflict within the parent-child relationship, within the romantic relationship of the subject, and within the relationship between the parents (see Appendix B). The questionnaire assessed the extent to which the respondent conflicts with a specified other on matters of living arrangements, job, free time, time together, friends, relatives, money, vacation, religion, sex, and bad habits. Respondents used a five-point scale to rate the areas of conflict. These questions were located at the bottom of the ROCI-II questionnaires.

Procedure. Each subject was contacted by phone if he or she reported being involved in a romantic relationship on a questionnaire administered in an earlier mass testing session. Data collection sessions were performed over a one-week period with subject groups ranging in number from 10 to 19. The questionnaires were administered individually to two male subjects who had missed the regular sessions. Subjects were told they would fill out five questionnaires. Each questionnaire was concerned with behaviors an

individual might engage in during conflict, as well as eleven topics over which individuals can conflict. Each questionnaire asked about behaviors between two different people (such as the subject with his or her romantic partner and the subject's mother with his or her father). Subjects also were told they would be asked to take a questionnaire for their romantic partner to complete and that questionnaires also would be mailed to their parents. Emphasis was placed on the fact that responses to all questionnaires were strictly confidential.

Participants were then asked if they anticipated any problems with this procedure. Ten individuals acknowledged their parents were divorced and one individual reported her father was deceased. The parents of two subjects divorced before the subjects were three years old, and eight parents had divorced after the subject was twelve. Some of the parents had not remarried. The subjects whose parents had not remarried were told to think about the two individuals (e.g., father and grandmother) in whose home they spent the most time growing up when responding to the questionnaires with references to parents as target and these were the people to whom the questionnaires were sent. Questionnaires were sent to each parent if they had not remarried. Two individuals stated they could not comply and were told they could withdraw from the study. Consent forms were then distributed (see Appendix C).

The subjects completed a total of five ROCI-IIs and five AICIs. The first questionnaire (i.e., one ROCI-II with one AICI) in the packet was concerned with the conflicts the subjects had with their current romantic partner. The remaining four questionnaires assessed the subjects' perception of their own conflicts with their mother and father and the subjects' perception of their mother's conflicts with father and father's conflicts with mother. The order of the last four questionnaires was counterbalanced.

When the participants completed the questionnaires, they provided the address of their parents. The subjects also were given a ROCI-II and a AICI in a campus mail envelope for their romantic partner to complete. The instructions on the romantic partner's questionnaire asked for the partner's perception of the subject's CM behaviors. The ROCI-II and the AICI were mailed to the parents and/or stepparents of the subjects participating in the experiment. A cover letter was provided that explained the nature of the study and included instructions needed to complete the questionnaires (see Appendix D). Two stamped return envelopes were included so that each parent could return his or her questionnaire separately. The parents were asked to fill out one ROCI-II and an AICI with regard to their spouse as target and another with reference to the subject as target.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Responses to the eleven conflict items on the AICI were factor

analyzed with varimax rotation. Items with factor loadings greater than .30

were retained in the final instrument. Factor loadings for the items are

located in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here.

The item concerning conflict about friends loaded relatively evenly on

factors I and II, although the loadings were less than .30. The item

concerning conflict about money loaded on factors I and III. The highest

loading for the item concerning religion was .26 on factor III. A reliability

analysis was performed in order to determine the effect of retaining or

deleting these items from the various scales. Reliability estimates can be

found in Table 3.

Based on these analyses, the item concerning friends was omitted from

scale II and retained on scale I. Similarly, the item concerning money was

omitted from scale III and retained on scale I. Finally, the item concerning

religion was omitted from scale III and treated as a separate "scale." Thus the

final version of subscale I was composed of items concerning living

arrangements, job, friends, relatives, money, and vacation and was labelled "General Living." Subscale II was comprised of items concerning free time and time together and was labelled "Companionship." Items concerning bad habits and sex constituted subscale III and was labelled "Personal." Subscale IV consisted of the one religion item.

Conflict Behaviors

Analyses revealed differences between the sexes on all comparisons. Results, therefore, are reported separately for males and females, and for same-sex and opposite-sex parents. Results concerning CM behaviors as well as topics of conflict will be reported in three sections: (a) agreement between subjects' reports and others' reports, (b) intergenerational transfer, and (c) consistency of behaviors across relationships. Because some of the analyses are of low statistical power, non-significant correlations greater than .30 will be discussed.

Agreement of Behavioral Reports. Because the correlations that reveal the extent to which individuals agreed on the use of similar CM behaviors are of interest, the correlations on the diagonals of the matrices will be focused on in the results. In general, agreement between behavioral reports was lacking.

Subjects' and Partners' Reports. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to assess the extent to which subjects and romantic partners agreed

on subjects' CM behaviors (see Table 4). No significant correlations were obtained between males' and partners' reports of the same behaviors. However, significant correlations were obtained between females' and partners' reports on females' use of problem-solving and obliging. Note that the correlation coefficient for males' problem-solving, although not statistically significant, is greater than .30. It is likely this correlation would be statistically significant with a larger sample of male subjects. Given the strength of this correlation, there seems to be some agreement between males' and their partners on males' use of problem-solving.

Insert Table 4 about here.

Subjects' and Parents' Reports. Correlations also were computed between subjects' and parents' perceptions of behaviors exhibited by parents during conflicts in the spousal relationship (see Table 5). Focusing on same-sex parents first, the greatest number of significant correlations was obtained between females' and mothers' reports of mothers' CM behaviors with fathers. Specifically, females and mothers agreed on mothers' use of dominating, avoiding, and obliging with fathers. Males and fathers only agreed on fathers' use of problem-solving. The correlation for obliging, although not statistically significant, was greater than .30, suggesting that males and fathers do agree on

fathers' use of the behavior. Turning to opposite-sex parents, only one significant positive correlation for avoiding was obtained between females' and fathers' reports. In reference to male's and mother's reports, the correlation for avoiding was greater than .30, suggesting males and mothers do agree on mothers' use of the behavior.

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Insert Table 5 about here.

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In summary, there was relatively little agreement between reports. Only seven out of twenty-four correlations reached a statistically significant level. Relative to male subjects, female subjects agreed to a greater extent with their partners and their parents on the use of CM behaviors. Note that the correlational analyses reported in Tables 4 and 5 have relatively low power, and several non-significant correlations exceed the .30 level. It is expected that more significant correlations would be obtained with a larger number of subjects.

Intergenerational Transfer of C-M Behaviors. The primary concern of the present study is the relationship between parents' and childrens' use of the same CM behaviors and conflict over the same topics. For instance, modeling effects might be indicated if the correlations between mothers' and subjects' use of problem-solving are significantly correlated. Although the correlation

between a mother's use of dominating and a child's use of avoiding is interesting, it does not reflect modeling. Thus, correlations on the diagonals of the correlational matrices will be the focus of the following presentation of results.

To investigate the intergenerational transfer hypothesis, subjects' CM behaviors in their romantic relationship were compared to parents' CM behaviors in the spousal relationship. Focus first on the correlations concerning same-sex parents. As shown in Table 6, the greatest number of significant correlations was between males' and fathers' behaviors. Males reported using all CM behaviors to a similar extent that they perceived fathers using with mothers. Females reported using obliging when they perceived their mothers using that behavior with their fathers. Turning to the correlations concerning opposite-sex parents, both males and females reported using dominating, avoiding, and obliging to a similar extent that they perceived their opposite-sex parent as using.

Insert Table 6 about here.

In summary, males reported using dominating, avoiding, and obliging when their mothers were perceived to use the same behaviors with their fathers, and problem-solving, dominating, avoiding, and obliging when fathers

were perceived to use the same behaviors with their mothers. Females reported using more obliging when they perceived their mothers as using the same behavior; they reported using dominating, avoiding, and obliging when they perceived their fathers using the same behaviors with their mothers.

Consistency of Behaviors Across Relationships. Subjects reported using the various CM behaviors to a similar extent with their romantic partners, same-sex-parents, and opposite-sex parent (see Table 7). Specifically, males reported using problem-solving, dominating, avoiding, and obliging to a similar extent with their partners, same-sex parents, and opposite-sex parents. Females reported using dominating and avoiding to a similar extent with their romantic partners and both of their parents.

Insert Table 7 about here.

In summary, males reported using all CM behaviors consistently across the indicated relationships. Females reported using dominating and avoiding to a similar extent in both their romantic and parent-child relationships.

Conflict Areas

Subjects were questioned about specific topics of conflict in their romantic and parent-child relationships. Results concerning topics of conflict also will be reported in three sections: (a) agreement between subjects'

reports and others' reports, (b) intergenerational transfer, and (c) consistency of behaviors across relationships.

Agreement of Conflict Area Reports. In general, there was inconsistent agreement between reports of conflict areas. Again, because the comparisons of interest are between the same conflict areas, the correlations on the diagonals of the matrices will be focused on in the results.

Subjects' and Partners' Reports. As shown in Table 8, positive correlations were obtained between male subjects' and their partners' reports of conflict over companionship and personal issues. Female subjects and their partners agreed on conflicting about general living and religion issues.

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Insert Table 8 about here.

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Subjects' and Parents' Reports. Correlations were computed to assess the extent subjects and parents agreed on parents' areas of conflict in the spousal relationship (see Table 9). Focusing on same-sex parents first, males agreed with fathers only on fathers' conflicting with mothers on general living issues. Females and mothers agreed on mothers' conflicting with fathers on general living and personal issues. In addition, the correlation for companionship issues was greater than .30, suggesting mothers and daughters agree on mothers' conflict on this topic. Turning to opposite-sex parents,

males and mothers agreed on mothers' conflicting with fathers on general living and companionship issues. Females and fathers agreed on fathers' conflicting with mothers on general living and companionship issues. In reference to opposite-sex parents, the correlation for personal issues was greater than .30 for both males and females, suggesting subjects agreed on their opposite-sex parents' conflict over this topic.

Insert Table 9 about here.

To summarize, males and parents agreed on parents conflicting about general living issues. In addition males and mothers agreed on mothers' conflicting with fathers about companionship issues. Females and mothers agreed on mothers conflicting with fathers about general living and personal issues, whereas females and fathers agreed on fathers conflicting with mothers about general living and companionship issues. Of the sixteen correlations of interest, a total of seven were statistically significant. The total is raised to ten if all correlations greater than .30 are considered, suggesting that subjects and their parents are agreeing somewhat on parents' conflict areas.

Intergenerational Transfer of Conflict Areas. Because the correlations on the diagonals of the correlational matrices indicate the extent to which subjects and parents conflict on the same topics with their partners, focus will

be on these correlations. Subjects' reported conflict with their partners on the specified topics was compared to the topics of conflict between parents. Minimal evidence was obtained in support of the transfer of conflict areas intergenerationally.

In fact, only one significant correlation was obtained (see Table 10). Females reported conflicting on companionship issues with their romantic partners more when they reported that their mothers conflicted with their fathers on the same issue.

Insert Table 10 about here.

Consistency of Conflict Areas Across Relationships. Comparisons were made between subjects conflicting on certain topics with their partners and with parents (see Table 11). Regarding same-sex parents, males reportedly conflicted with fathers and partners on general living and personal issues to a similar extent. Focusing on opposite-sex parents, males reported conflicting with partners and mothers on general living and personal issues.

Females did not report consistent conflict on the indicated topics with their partners and parents. Males, on the other hand, reported conflicting on

general living and personal issues with their partners and both parents.

Insert Table 11 about here.

Discussion

Several studies have shown that the tendency toward violent CM

behavior is learned in the home (Steinmetz, 1977; Jorgenson, 1985; Carter,

Stacey, & Shupe, 1988; Tontodonato & Crew, 1992). The present study

suggests that alternative and perhaps less aggressive methods of managing

conflict also may be learned from one's parents and underscores the influence

of parents in the development of social behaviors.

Correspondence Among Behavioral Reports

In an attempt to obtain more reliable data on the subjects' and

parents' CM behaviors, reports from others were collected in addition to self-

reports. In general, there was a lack of correspondence among behavioral

reports. Only 25% of the correlations of interest reached a statistically

significant level. Females and their partners were in agreement over the

females' use of problem-solving and obliging with their partners, whereas

males did not agree with their partners on any of their CM behaviors. The

ROCI-II was developed as a self-report measure and has been used as such in

subsequent research (e.g.,Rahim, 1983; Pilkington et al., 1988). Using the

ROCI-II to rate another person's behavior may not be an appropriate use of

the instrument. Romantic partners may be unreliable raters of their

partners' behaviors due to complex situational and affective factors in their

romantic relationship. For instance, anger with their partner may increase

perceptions of negative behaviors. For similar reasons, the objectivity of parents may be suspect as well. In addition, an individual using the ROCI-II to rate another person's behaviors would have to make certain assumptions about the other person's behavior. For instance, a romantic partner responding to the statement, "My romantic partner tries to keep his/her disagreements to himself/herself in order to avoid hard feelings," would first have to judge if the person is keeping disagreements concealed and then decide if the person is doing so to avoid hard feelings. It may be impossible for anyone other than the individual to accurately respond to this statement.

Two points are worth noting in reference to the comparison of behavioral reports. Females and their partners agreed on the females' use of CM behaviors that imply a high concern for the other person. Partners of female subjects may have been selectively recalling CM behaviors appropriate to the female gender role (e.g., caregiving, compassion). It is unclear why similar results were not obtained for partners of male subjects. For instance, dominating is a behavior considered more appropriate to the male gender role. If gender-stereotypic behaviors were being reported by partners, males and their partners should have been in agreement over the use of dominating. The need to be perceived as using socially desirable CM behaviors may have resulted in reporting the use of behaviors that imply a high concern for the other person. However, Rahim (1983) contends all of the scales but one (i.e.,

integrating) are free from social desirability and response direction bias.

Spousal CM behaviors as reported by the parents appeared more consistent with their child's perception of their behavior when the parent and child were of the same sex. Identification with the same-sex parent may increase attentiveness to that parent's behavior. In turn, this should increase the probability of correctly recalling that behavior at a later time.

Intergenerational Transfer

If an individual acquires CM behaviors through social learning processes, as is suggested, one might argue that the subject's perception of parents' behaviors, rather than real behaviors, is a more important determinant in the acquisition of those behaviors. As Epstein (1979) states,

> [An] individual's cognitions and perceptual processes, as much as the objective characteristics of the stimulus, determine the meaning of the stimulus (p. 1102).

Modeling, therefore, does not result in a duplication of the observed behaviors. Rather, an individual observes a behavior and blends that observation with other subjective knowledge he or she possesses to produce a new behavior. Therefore, the CM behaviors of parents as reported by subjects should be considered more meaningful than parents' self-reported behaviors in the interpretation of the results.

When subjects' reports were used, some support for the

intergenerational transfer hypothesis was found. Males' self-reported use of CM behaviors with their romantic partners corresponded to males' perceptions of CM behaviors between parents. Specifically, males reported using problem-solving, dominating, avoiding, and obliging when they perceived their fathers using those behaviors with their mothers. Males reported using dominating, avoiding, and obliging when they perceived their mothers using those behaviors with their fathers. Correspondence between females' behavioral reports and perceived behaviors between parents was not as strong. Females reported using dominating, avoiding, and obliging with their partners when they perceived their fathers using those behaviors with their mothers and obliging when they perceived their mothers using that behavior with their fathers. In general, both males' and females' own use of CM behaviors appeared more similar to their fathers' use of CM behaviors in the spousal relationship than their mother's use of CM behaviors.

Identification with a parent and the perceived rewards of the parent's behavior may be two mediating factors in the modeling of CM behaviors. Neapolitan (1981) studied parental influences on aggressive behavior of male high school students and found that the fathers' behavior had more of an impact on the subjects' aggressive behavior when the subject identified more with the father. Likewise, the mothers' behaviors were reported to have more of an impact when the subject identified more with the mother. The desire to

be like a particular parent may mediate the acquisition or performance of aggressive behavior. Unfortunately, Neapolitan (1981) used only male subjects. The use of females would provide a more thorough investigation of possible sex-role and identification effects in the acquisition of aggressive behavior.

Other researchers studying modeling influences on aggressive and assertive behavior have found that perceived rewards influence behaviors. Plax, Kearney, and Beatty (1985) found that perceptions of fathers' rather than mothers' assertiveness contributed more to the subjects' self-reported assertiveness. However, when the perception of rewarding consequences of assertive behavior was considered, the opposite result was obtained. In other words, perceptions of mothers' assertiveness was reported to be more influential than perceptions of fathers' assertiveness on the subjects' self-reported assertiveness when the mothers' behavior was judged as rewarding. Identification with the same-sex parent may influence the attentional process in modeling by making the same-sex parent a more appealing model; this appears to be the case in the present study. However, the reinforcement and motivational processes in modeling may outweigh the effects of the attention process in the enactment of the behavior. In other words, the reinforcing properties of observing a rewarded behavior may be a stronger mediator than identification with a parent in the performance of the behavior. If, in the

present study, fathers' behaviors were perceived as resulting in more positive outcomes to conflict, the probability of modeling the behavior would be expected to increase. Questioning subjects about their perceptions of success of their parents' CM behaviors would help support this explanation.

Consistency of Behaviors Across Relationships

The findings of the present study are consistent with Sternberg & Soriano's (1984) investigation in which a .57 to .94 correlation was obtained for intra-domain (e.g., interpersonal) consistency of CM behaviors, although the correlations in the present study (i.e., .32 to .65) were not as strong. Although subjects' reports of their CM behaviors across their romantic and parent-child relationships were similar, females appeared somewhat less consistent than males in their use of behaviors across the indicated relationships. Males, on the other hand, reported using all behaviors consistently across relationships. The finding that males appear to exhibit a more consistent use of CM behaviors is congruent with the conclusions of other researchers. Sternberg & Soriano (1984) found males were more consistent than females in their ratings of the desirability of conflict resolution methods across personal, organizational, and international conflicts. These authors suggested that males may see conflicts in these categories as being similar. As applied to the present study, females may be making greater distinctions among their close relationships than men. As a result, females

may consider certain CM strategies more favorable in some situations than others.

Conflict Areas

More agreement was obtained between reports of conflict topics as opposed to reports of conflict behaviors. Forty-six percent of the correlations of interest reached a significant level. However, several other correlation coefficients on the diagonals approached significance, indicating that more agreement between reports would be expected with a larger sample.

Conflict areas in romantic relationships were not found to be transferred from one generation to the next. However, this finding is not surprising because most college students have not yet been faced with the conflict that accompanies the life experiences and responsibilities of marriage and child-rearing. A study of conflict topics after the subjects were married might more accurately measure the intergenerational transfer of conflict topics.

Similarly, topics of conflict reported by subjects were not consistent across the romantic and parent-child relationships. The exception was males conflicting about general living and personal issues with their partners and parents.

The assessment of conflict topics in the present study was intended as a preliminary step towards a more thorough investigation of ways parents might influence one's tendency to conflict with a romantic partner on certain topics.

Researchers have found that parents' attitudes and emotional responses can be transferred to their children (Sethi, 1973; Feather, 1978; Acock & Bengston, 1980). The degree to which an individual conflicts with another person on a certain topic is assumed to be mediated, in part, by the individual's attitude regarding and emotional response to that topic. As a result, it is expected that future research will show that children respond to certain marital conflict topics in a similar manner as their parents.

Conclusions

The method used to study the intergenerational transfer of CM behaviors was considered appropriate given the restrictions inherent to the present study. Self-reports were used because direct observations of the parents and subjects were not feasible. Ideal methods would include measures of behavior taken over time. Epstein (1979) points out that examination of single behaviors leads to minimal evidence for stability. When several samples of a behavior are taken, the evidence for stability is more likely to be found. Thus, having subjects report about more than one conflict or having subjects report on more than one occasion would help increase the reliability of any conclusions.

In fact, most methods of studying conflict management ask subjects to report on their conflict behaviors in general within an unspecified time frame. A subject may be inclined to think about the most recent or most salient

conflict during reporting, which may distort his or her own sense of

consistency of handling conflict. Nezlek, Wheeler, and Reis (1983) propose a

diary method of collecting data on social interactions. Applying this method

to the study of conflict, an individual could record the occurrence of conflict

on a daily basis, and the behaviors, emotions, and attitudes of the individual

could then be analyzed. This method would increase the reliability in

measurement of CM behaviors by providing multiple assessments of conflict

behavior (Epstein, 1979) and would be a more accurate test of cross-

situational consistency.

In the present study, the mood of the individual on the day of

reporting could have influenced the subjects' responses (Ross, McFarland, &

Fletcher, 1981; Ross, McFarland, Conway, & Zanna 1983). McFarland and

Ross (1987) found that when peoples' views of themselves or another person

changed over time, their memories of previous events also changed. For

instance, individuals whose love for their partner increased over time reported

higher levels of love or liking in the past than they had previously reported.

In the current study, recent conflicts could have dominated recall of CM

behaviors and distorted an individual's perception of CM behaviors typically

used.

Ideally, parents' behaviors would have been assessed during the

subjects' adolescence. Steinmetz (1977) reported that conflict behaviors used

by families changed during this time. There is reason, therefore, to be concerned with the appropriateness of using ratings of CM behaviors taken during the subjects' early adulthood.

Conflict interactions between other family members also should be investigated. For instance, the subjects' conflict behaviors with his or her parents or siblings may be a mediating factor in the acquisition of CM behaviors with others. Because rehearsal operations can aid in the retention of a modeled behavior (Bandura, 1971), the extent to which an individual is allowed to display a CM behavior by the family may determine the use of the behavior in the future.

Further research on the intergenerational transfer of CM behaviors should be sensitive to the effects of sex differences, gender-role expectancies, identification with parents, perceived rewards of CM behaviors, and the various conflict interactions within the family system. It is hypothesized that the reinforcement processes in modeling will have the greatest effect on the performance of CM behaviors.

Researchers have given the topic of conflict-resolution styles increasing attention (Sternberg & Soriano, 1984; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987). Future research might investigate how the use of CM behaviors is influenced by the specific goal of the actor and who would benefit from the influence of the goal-directed behaviors. For instance, Dillard (1989) designates the goal of

gaining assistance as being high in source benefit. In other words, the individual who is attempting to gain assistance will benefit more from the action than the other individual. In contrast, goals directed at giving advice on how one should live are higher in target benefit. The goal-directed behavior is intended to help the other person more so than the person who is attempting the influence. An individual whose goals are self-benefit might be more likely to use CM behaviors that imply high concern for self (i.e., integrating and dominating) rather than high concern for other (i.e., obliging, avoiding, and compromising). Individuals whose goals are other-benefit might be more likely to use behaviors that imply a high concern for the other.

Future research might also consider how the processes of conflict management fit into an interactional model of personality (Endler & Magnusson, 1976). In this model, behavior is determined by a process in which the person and the situation continuously interact. The person is considered an active participant in this process and can be affected by cognitive and emotional factors. The psychological meaning of the situation also can affect behavior. The model suggests that the consistency of behavior will differ across situations that differ in character. Thus, a person might use similar CM behaviors across situations that they perceive to be psychologically similar. For instance, repeated interactions with a given individual may be seen as a specific situation in which an individual would be consistent in his

or her use of CM behaviors. Alternatively, a person may consistently use a particular strategy when conflicting over a given topic area and/or goal.

Thus, studying how an individual determines the psychological similarity of conflict situations and how this determination affects his or her behavior might be useful. Current research on the situational consistency of CM behaviors has used methods in which the situations are defined by the researcher as being either similar or dissimilar. For example, Sternberg and Soriano (1984) used interpersonal, interorganizational, and international situations to study CM behaviors. Sternberg and Dobson (1987) used situations involving a same-sex peer, an opposite-sex peer, and a parent. Interestingly, the researchers in both studies concluded that there was sufficient evidence to indicate cross-situational consistency. Sternberg and Dobson's (1987) situations represented conflicts with individuals the person knows, whereas Sternberg and Soriano's (1984) situations appeared to cover a wider range of possible conflict situations. Perhaps the interaction between a person and the situation is too complex for researchers to objectively define which situation is different from another for a given individual. Males in the current study and in Sternberg & Soriano's (1984) study were more consistent than females in the use of CM behaviors across situations, suggesting that males and females may perceive the similarity between situations differently. Having a better understanding of which situations are indeed different and

which are psychologically similar will add a great deal to the study of CM

behaviors.

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Footnotes

[1]Analyses indicated that subjects' responses did not vary meaningfully as a function of whether or not parents responded to questionnaires.

Table 1

Item Loadings For ROCI-II Based on Varimax Rotation

Specifying Four Factors

	Factors[b]			
Item No.[a]	PS	OB	DO	AV
1	.77	-.02	.01	-.01
2	.34	.29	-.09	.37
3	-.11	.56	-.09	.19
4	.61	-.05	.02	.07
5	.80	-.11	.07	.08
6	-.34	.52	-.09	.03
7	.55	.24	-.02	-.01
8	.14	-.08	.65	-.13
9	.12	-.19	.77	-.03
10	.11	.22	-.09	.62
11	-.02	.26	.01	.56
12	.69	-.15	.05	.10
13	.29	.25	.16	.39
14	.64	.12	.05	.06
15	.76	-.13	-.03	.12
16	.08	.56	-.12	.21
17	-.17	.53	-.16	.23
18	.02	-.23	.73	-.13
19	-.10	.24	-.05	.62
20	.55	.21	.25	-.21
21	-.08	-.58	.24	.01
22	.70	-.32	-.02	-.03
23	.73	-.26	-.05	.11
24	.18	-.13	-.03	.60
25	-.21	-.16	.54	.19
26	-.15	.65	.02	.23
27	-.05	.69	-.17	.03
28	.77	-.22	-.01	.06

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding; DO =Dominating.

[a]Refer to Appendix A for statements associated with each number.

[b]Underlined number indicates on which factor item loaded.

Table 2

Item-Total Correlations For ROCI-II Categories

Item No.	Category			
	PS	OB	DO	AV
1	.52			
2		.54*		
3			.50	
4	.62			
5	.66*			
6				.62*
7	.45			
8			.61*	
9			.63*	
10		.59*		
11		.55*		
12	.57			
13			.46	
14	.57			
15	.68*			
16				.57*
17				.48
18			.61*	
19		.45		
20	.57			
21			.31	
22	.57			
23	.74*			
24		.60*		
25			.65*	
26				.69*
27				.66*
28	.67*			

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding;

DO = Dominating.

* Items retained for inclusion in the questionnaire.

Table 3

Item Loadings For Conflict Items Based on Varimax Rotations
Specifying Three Factors and Alpha Coefficients If Item Is
Deleted From the Scale

Items	General Living Factor 1		Companionship Factor 2		Personal Factor 3	
	Factor Loading	Alpha If Deleted	Factor Loading	Alpha If Deleted	Factor Loading	Alpha If Deleted
1. Living Arrangements[1]	.47	.62	.16		.14	
2. Job[1]	.46	.64	.04		.07	
3. Free Time[2]	.20		.77	.36	.23	
4. Time Together[2]	.13		.72	.54	.14	
5. Friends[1]	.28	.67	.29	.81	.20	
6. Relatives[1]	.25	.65	.09		.22	
7. Money[1]	.62	.55	.02		.42	.45
8. Vacation[1]	.61	.58	.20		-.02	
9. Religion[4]	.07		.05		.26	.62(.59)
10. Sex[3]	.03		.25		.52	.46(.09)
11. Bad Habits[3]	.23		.10		.60	.46(.33)
Alpha for All Original Items	.66		.69		.62(.45)	
Alpha For Scale With Retained Items	.66		.81		.59	

Note. Underlined number indicates on which factor item loaded highest. Numbers in parentheses are alphas if that item is deleted from a scale consisting

of items #9, #10, and #11. Numbers after individual items indicate on which scale the items were retained.

Table 4

Correlations Between Subjects' Self-Reported CM Behaviors
With Romantic Partners and Romantic Partners' Reports of
Subjects' CM Behaviors

Subjects' Reports		Partners' Reports[a]			
		PS	DO	AV	OB
PS	M[a]	.35	-.42*	.27	.12
	F[b]	.48**	-.11	-.54**	.38*
DO	M	-.27	.21	-.23	-.10
	F	-.41*	.06	-.11	-.41*
AV	M	.01	-.14	.05	.12
	F	-.09	-.03	.21	.04
OB	M	.33	-.11	.12	.26
	F	.43**	-.01	.07	.45**

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding;

DO = Dominating. M = Male Subjects; F = Female Subjects.

[a]df = 32. [b]df = 36.

*p<.05. **p<.01.

Table 5

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of Parents' CM Behaviors
With Spouses and Parents' Self-Reported CM Behaviors

	Parents' Reports							
	Same Sex Parent				Opposite Sex Parent			
Subjects' Reports	PS	DO	AV	OB	PS	DO	AV	OB
Males[a]								
PS	.45*	-.09	.35	.22	.15	.09	.03	-.10
DO	-.06	.28	-.16	.07	.05	-.09	-.29	.09
AV	.31	-.15	.15	.15	-.13	.13	.31	-.04
OB	.54**	.11	.25	.36	.18	.35	.17	.07
Females[b]								
PS	.18	-.07	-.33*	.05	.06	-.13	.02	.18
DO	-.24	.50**	-.12	-.35	-.04	.30	-.59**	-.23
AV	-.05	-.33*	.40*	.28	-.22	-.25	.43**	.28
OB	.20	-.39*	.07	.50**	.13	-.05	.28	.20

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding; DO =
Dominating.

[a]df = 21 for same-sex parent; df = 24 for opposite-sex parent.

[b]df = 36 for same-sex parent; df = 33 for opposite-sex parent.

*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$.

Table 6

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of CM Behaviors With

Romantic Partners and Reports of CM Behaviors Between Parents

| | Subjects' Reports of Parents' Behavior | | | | | | | |
| | Same Sex Parent | | | | Opposite Sex Parent | | | |
Subjects' Reports Of Own Behavior	PS	DO	AV	OB	PS	DO	AV	OB
Males[a]								
PS	.46**	-.15	.21	.44**	.23	-.16	-.17	.26
DO	-.04	.56**	-.10	-.16	-.16	.33*	.06	-.06
AV	.03	.01	.29**	-.23	.05	-.14	.49**	-.12
OB	.48**	-.10	.30*	.66**	.20	.02	-.20	.34**
Females[b]								
PS	.08	.14	-.31*	-.05	.06	-.03	-.04	-.04
DO	-.09	.06	.24	-.05	-.04	.46**	-.05	-.11
AV	-.01	-.16	.12	-.10	.07	-.15	.29*	.01
OB	.16	.02	-.01	.35**	.09	-.03	.07	.33*

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding; DO = Dominating.

[a]df = 42 for same-sex parent; df = 42 for opposite-sex parent.

[b]df = 58 for same-sex parent; df = 58 for opposite-sex parent.

*p<.05. **p<.01.

Table 7

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of CM Behaviors With Romantic Partners and Reports of CM Behaviors With Parents

	Subjects' Reported Behaviors With Parents							
	Same Sex Parent				Opposite Sex Parent			
Subjects' Reported Behavior With Partners	PS	DO	AV	OB	PS	DO	AV	OB
Males[a]								
PS	.56**	-.02	.03	.33*	.52**	-.23	-.09	.35*
DO	-.12	.47**	-.05	.12	-.22	.65**	.02	-.15
AV	-.06	.01	.32*	-.05	.03	-.02	.37*	-.18
OB	.45**	.20	-.03	.46**	.28	-.01	-.01	.37*
Females[b]								
PS	.18	.07	-.16	-.05	.24	.06	-.05	.26*
DO	.12	.56**	-.02	.04	-.03	.64**	.14	.01
AV	-.39**	-.16	.47**	-.17	-.14	-.14	.38**	.18
OB	.02	-.13	.04	.26	.15	-.20	-.11	.20

Note. PS = Problem Solving; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding; DO = Dominating.

[a]Male subjects' behaviors with romantic partners; df = 42 for same-sex parent; df = 42 for opposite-sex parent.

[b]Female subjects' behaviors with romantic partners; df = 58 for same-sex parent; df = 59 for opposite-sex parent.

*p<.05. **p<.01.

Table 8

Correlations Between Subjects' Self-Reported Conflict Areas
With Romantic Partners and Romantic Partners' Reports of
Subjects' Conflict Areas

Romantic Partners' Perception		Subjects' Reports[a]			
		General Living	Companionship	Personal	Religion
General Living	M[a]	.18	.21	.22	-.05
	F[b]	.51**	.29	.28	-.09
Companionship	M	-.01	.61**	.34	.05
	F	.16	.21	-.09	.04
Personal	M	.21	.16	.58**	-.10
	F	.13	.04	.29	.02
Religion	M	-.33	-.08	-.01	.29
	F	.24	.29	.19	.45**

Note. M = Male Subjects; F = Female Subjects

[a]df = 30.

[b]df = 30

**$p < .01$.

Table 9

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of Parents' Conflict Areas and Parents' Self-Reported Conflict Areas

	Parents' Self-Reported Behaviors							
	Same Sex Parent				Opposite Sex Parent			
Subjects' Reports Of Parents' Conflict	GL	CP	PE	RE	GL	CP	PE	RE
Males[a]								
GL	.46*	.12	.13	.29**	.57*	.38	.39*	.52**
CP	.30	.29	.04	.37	.52**	.44*	.26	.55**
PE	.31	.13	.26	.23	.45*	.33	.34	.46*
RE	-.17	-.11	-.31	.28	.11	.09	-.18	.28
Females[b]								
GL	.45**	.30	.28	-.13	.50**	.50	.31	.28
CP	.29	.41	.42**	.07	.42*	.47**	.18	.12
PE	.40*	.60**	.53**	.01	.32	.59**	.33	.06
RE	.14	.06	-.07	-.01	.27	.10	-.07	-.01

Note. GL = General Living; CP = Companionship; PE = Personal; RE = Religion;

[a]Male subjects; df = 21 for same-sex parent; df = 24 for opposite-sex parent.

[b]Female subjects; df = 36 for same-sex parent; df = 33 for opposite-sex parent.

*p<.05. **p<.01.

Table 10

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of Conflict Areas With
Romantic Partners and Reports of Conflict Areas Between Parents

| | Subjects' Perception of Parents' Conflicts | | | | | | | |
| | Same Sex Parent | | | | Opposite Sex Parent | | | |
Subjects' Reports Of Own Conflict	GL	CP	PE	RE	GL	CP	PE	RE
Males[a]								
GL	.20	.06	.30*	.34*	.14	.10	.28	.25
CP	.32*	.05	.13	.13	.24	.07	.09	.18
PE	.33*	.35*	.25	.12	.39**	.31*	.24	.04
RE	.10	.07	.07	.12	.28	.17	.23	.06
Females[b]								
GL	-.12	.14	-.05	-.09	-.03	.04	.05	-.12
CP	.08	.32*	.05	-.11	-.01	.23	.03	-.17
PE	.04	..06	.04	.09	-.05	.01	-.04	.14
RE	-.05	-.04	-.17	.17	.08	-.06	-.17	.16

Note. GL = General Living; CP = Companionship; PE = Personal; RE = Religion;

[a]Male subjects; df = 42 for same sex parent; df = 42 for opposite sex parent.

[b]Female subjects; df = 58 for same sex parent; df = 58 for opposite sex parent.

*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$.

Table 11

Correlations Between Subjects' Reports of Conflict Areas With Romantic Partners and Reports of Conflict Areas With Parents

	Subjects' Perception of Conflict With Parents							
	Same Sex Parent				Opposite Sex Parent			
Subjects' Reported Behavior With Partners	GL	CP	PE	RE	GL	CP	PE	RE
Males[a]								
GL	.48**	.45**	.34	.49**	.48**	.12	.58**	.43
CP	.08	-.05	.03	-.04	.18	-.15	.04	.02
PE	.22	.28	.32*	.16	.24	.04	.46**	.26
RE	-.06	-.06	.01	.05	.10	.07	.14	.01
Females[b]								
GL	.08	-.07	.03	-.18	.07	-.04	.16	-.01
CP	.09	.01	-.05	-.19	.01	.07	-.05	-.15
PE	.06	-.06	.12	-.09	.15	-.14	.16	.13
RE	.25	.07	.04	.05	.28*	.19	-.08	.11

Note. GL = General Living; CP = Companionship; PE = Personal; RE = Religion;

[a]Male subjects; df = 42 for same sex parent; df = 42 for opposite sex parent.

[b]Female subjects; df = 58 for same sex parent; df = 59 for opposite sex parent.

*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$.

Appendix A

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory - II

Listed below are statements that describe different things you might do to settle a problem or deal with a conflict with someone'. Indicate what you do when you deal with such conflicts by circling the appropriate number. Use the scale below.

1 = Never   2 = Almost Never   3 = Sometimes
4 = Almost Always   5 = Always

1.   I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to us. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

2. * I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

3.   I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my peers to myself. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

4.   I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to come up with a decision jointly. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

5. * I try to work with my peers to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

6. * I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

7.   I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse. — 1 2 3 4 5 [CO]

8. * I use my influence to get my ideas accepted. — 1 2 3 4 5 [DO]

9. * I use my authority to make a decision in my favor. — 1 2 3 4 5 [DO]

10.* I usually accommodate the wishes of my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

11.* I give in to the wishes of my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

12.   I exchange accurate information with my peers to solve a problem together. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

13.   I usually allow concessions to my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

14.   I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks. — 1 2 3 4 5 [CO]

15.* I negotiate with my peers so that a compromise can be reached. — 1 2 3 4 5 [CO]

16.* I try to stay away from disagreements with my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

17.   I avoid an encounter with my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

18.* I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor. — 1 2 3 4 5 [DO]

19.   I often go along with the suggestions of my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

20.   I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made. — 1 2 3 4 5 [CO]

21.   I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue. — 1 2 3 4 5 [DO]

22.   I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

23.* I collaborate with my peers to come up with decisions acceptable to us. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

24.* I try to satisfy the expectations of my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [OB]

25.* I sometimes use my power to win in competitive situations. — 1 2 3 4 5 [DO]

26.* I try to keep my disagreements with my peers to myself in order to avoid hard feelings. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

27.* I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peers. — 1 2 3 4 5 [AV]

28.* I try to work with my peers for a proper understanding of a problem. — 1 2 3 4 5 [IN]

Note. Asterisks indicate items retained for reduced version of the ROCI-II. Abbreviations at the end of each scale indicates the CM behavior the item measures. IN = Integrating; OB = Obliging; AV = Avoiding; DO = Dominating; CO = Compromising. The appropriate target person was used for the respective respondent.

Appendix B

Areas of Interpersonal Conflict Inventory

To what extent do you and your spouse, romantic partner, son, daughter, mother, or father conflict on each of the following topics?[a]
Please indicate to what extent you conflict with the other person on the topics by writing in the appropriate number in the blank beside each number. Please use the following scale:

1 = Never 2 = Almost Never 3 = Sometimes
4 = Almost Always 5 = Always

_____	1.	Living arrangements
_____	2.	Job
_____	3.	Free time
_____	4.	Time together
_____	5.	Friends
_____	6.	Relatives
_____	7.	Money
_____	8.	Vacation
_____	9.	Religion
_____	10.	Sex
_____	11.	Bad habits

[a]The appropriate target person was used for the respective respondent.

Appendix C

<u>Consent Form</u>

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT CONSENT FORM

The general nature of this study of conflict behaviors conducted by Susan Cunningham has been explained to me. I understand that I will be asked to complete six questionnaires. I further understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study. I know that I may refuse to answer any question asked and that I may discontinue participation at any time. I also understand that any grade, payment, or credit for participation will not be affected by my responses or by my exercising any of my rights. I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this experiment to the Psychology Department Chair. I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate. My signature below signifies my voluntary participation in this project.

_____   _____

Date   Signature

Appendix D

<u>Cover Letter</u>

Dear Parents

My name is Susan Cunningham, and I am a graduate student in the psychology department at the College of William and Mary. Your son/daughter recently participated in a study on interpersonal conflict that I am conducting for my Master's Thesis, and I need some information from you to complete the study.

If you are willing to help me, would each of you please complete one of the enclosed questionnaires? At the top of each questionnaire, you will find a number followed by a letter: 'M' for mother, and 'F' for father. Please complete the appropriate one by yourself. The number is simply a device that will allow us to keep your responses confidential. Your names will <u>in no way</u> be associated with your questionnaires. There are no right or wrong answers; I am simply interested in how you view the conflicts and disagreements that you have had with various family members.

I have enclosed stamped envelopes for each of you to return your questionnaire. Your participation is not mandatory and class credit will not be taken away from your son/daughter if you do not participate, buy your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Not only would it make the time spent by your son/daughter participating in the study worthwhile, it would add a great deal to our understanding of the process of interpersonal conflict.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (804) 221-3891. You also can contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Constance Pilkington at (804) 221-3898. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Susan Cunningham, B.S.

VITA

Susan Beth Cunningham

The author was born in Roanoke, Virginia, September 29, 1968. In 1990 she received her B.S. with a concentration in psychology from Radford University. She entered into the Masters program at The College of William and Mary in 1990.